



○ LEVELLING UP THE EAST OF ENGLAND:

2023-2030

The East of England's progress
towards achieving the Government's
twelve levelling up missions.



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Preface

The East of England APPG, the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA), business leaders and academic partners have come together to assess the region's progress towards the twelve missions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper which was published in February 2022.

This has been a unique and successful collaboration that has produced insightful and illuminating analysis across each of the levelling up ambitions in the White Paper. Our thanks to all who contributed to a commendable report that should be of interest not only to the Government but to all stakeholders with an interest in the prospects and prosperity of the East of England.

What the report makes clear is that the East of England is an economic success story with high levels of employment, pay and productivity as well as clusters of world leading research

and development (R&D) and innovation excellence. However, ours is a region where areas of significant deprivation, often, but not exclusively within our coastal and rural communities, as well as specific pockets of deprivation within our towns and cities, sit alongside some of the UK's most successful places. Sustainability – our proposed thirteenth mission – is also vitally important in the East of England.

The goals for each mission were set out in more optimistic times, as the worst of the pandemic was ending, and before the invasion of Ukraine, the cost of living crisis and this new period of recession.

Due to the timing of this report we have been able to reflect on the goals in the context of the UK's challenging economic conditions as at Q3 of 2022/23, including the most recent announcements from the Autumn Statement on 17 November.

The detailed analysis of each mission reveals mixed results. There are elements where the region is doing well despite the impact of Covid-19 and other factors, and where we retain a high degree of confidence that the Government's four can be addressed: [employment and pay](#); [R&D and wellbeing](#).

Unsurprisingly, there are now a number of missions where there is only medium confidence, including [digital connectivity](#), [pride in place](#), [crime](#), [devolution](#) and [our proposed additional mission on sustainability](#).

There are also missions where we now see low confidence, and critically in some of the issues most important to the people and prospects of the East of England: [education](#), [skills](#), [transport](#), [health and housing](#). These sectors, including local government, are being pushed to the brink, often running simply to stand still, so to achieve substantial improvements in these missions is even more challenging than ten months ago.

This report is therefore a call to action to prioritise and address levelling up barriers, in particular in our "low confidence" missions. We advocate urgent Government attention and propose a partnership approach with local government and wider business, public and third sector stakeholders to drive sustainable solutions.

As financial stability returns to central government, it must return for the region's key institutions - for councils, for schools, the police, for the increasingly integrated NHS and social care system. The role of local government is critical to this endeavour. Local Authorities are the leaders and conveners of place so a strong and financially sustainable local government sector is essential to the overall achievement of the levelling up policy.

However, this is not all about money.

Partnership will also be key to making progress as will a greater willingness to devolve powers. Skills and transport are good examples of where a delegated or devolved approach, and not just to those areas with Mayoral deals, could also help deliver results.

We look forward to working together with DLUHC as well as BEIS, DfT, DHSC and DfE to move forward.

We all subscribe to the same ambition: to level up the East of England by delivering a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable region.

As a net contributor to the Treasury, and an international gateway to the prosperity of the rest of the UK, this region stands ready to work in partnership, in the spirit of collaboration that has inspired this report, and make progress on levelling up in 2023 and beyond.



Peter Aldous MP
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Chair
East of England LGA

Executive summary

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the first regional analysis of the position across the East of England regarding the [Levelling Up missions in the Government's White Paper of February 2022 - Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#).

In the White Paper the Government set out the proposed scale of ambition for Levelling Up across the UK, detailing twelve missions against which progress could be measured over time.

Achieving progress against these missions requires a strategic and integrated approach, in terms of:

- Policy development and delivery - nationally, regionally and locally; and
- The prioritisation of funding to tackle inequalities

so that every community in the UK can benefit and prosper as intended from these ambitions.

- The role of local government is critical to this endeavour. Local Authorities are the leaders and conveners of place, so a strong and financially sustainable local government sector will be a rate limiting factor overall to the achievement of this policy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EAST OF ENGLAND

The East of England is an economic success story with traditionally high levels of employment and pay, having several clusters of R&D and innovation excellence, and being one of only three regions which are net contributors to the Exchequer.

As our [Regional Prospectus](#) and [Offer to Government](#) publication of 2021 demonstrates we have confidence that, with the right profile of funding and support our regional economy can continue to grow, due to our considerable existing assets and strengths in sectors of the future such as life sciences, agri-tech, green energy, higher education, tourism and ICT.

Meanwhile the city of Cambridge is undisputedly a globally competitive city - but we have other places, corridors and centres of innovation in our region which stand on the cusp of bigger opportunities.

However, we are also a region where:

- Areas of significant deprivation sit alongside some of the UK's most successful places.
- DLUHC has categorised all local authorities into priority 1, 2, 3 for levelling up funding using a methodology that aligns with indices of multiple deprivation. In the East of England there are 9 council areas assessed by DLUHC as most in need of levelling up funding (Great Yarmouth, Harlow, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Luton, Maldon, North Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend-on-Sea and Tendring).

- Whilst recognition of the needs of these category 1 areas is welcome, this broad-brush approach will hide pockets of places in many of the other 35 council areas with high levelling up needs.



The East of England Population has grown **by 8.3% per the 2021** Census data, making us the fastest growing region in terms of population.

Too much of the region's potential is being held back by some of the key barriers to Levelling Up which are noted in this report, for example housing affordability and quality, access to skills, transport connectivity, reduced digital connectivity, and the threats posed by climate change. These are already presenting significant risks to the achievement of the Levelling Up missions as a whole.

OUR FINDINGS AND MEASURING THE MISSIONS

At the time of writing this report there is no national framework or prescribed set of metrics for assessing and measuring the missions.

There are therefore no consistent or formal baselines from which to measure or benchmark our current position for this specific purpose, although various existing metrics, parameters and data sets that could potentially be aligned to the missions have been considered by the authors and reflected in this report.

It is anticipated the approach to systematic measurement will be shaped over the coming months by central government with the engagement and co-production of local government and many other bodies. Partners in the East of England would wish to be closely involved in this programme of work.

The assessments we have made – our current view regarding current whether there is high, medium or low confidence that the mission will be achieved by 2030 – are set out in the following thematic chapters where we have explained the background to the issues and our analysis.

A thirteenth chapter focussed on the important issue of sustainability, including net zero and water security, has been added to our report, with the impact of climate change on our region in particular being of paramount importance.

Our initial analysis and confidence assessment for each of the thirteen areas outlined in this report gives a mixed result. There are examples where the region is doing well and could be considered on course to achieve the Government's objective(s) but there are also plenty of areas where confidence is rated low to medium and a number of areas that are considered as "flashing red".

The Government can only achieve the ambitions in the Levelling Up White Paper by heeding the recommendations in this report and working in partnership with the local government sector, the wider public sector, the private sector, academic bodies and innovators.

Levelling Up missions, confidence levels and key recommendations

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
I By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, and the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.	The Government should recognise the unique challenges to improve pay, employment and productivity in rural and coastal areas and publish a rural and coastal levelling up strategy to address these challenges.	HIGH
II By 2030, domestic public investment in R&D outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40%, and over the Spending Review period by at least one third. This additional government funding will seek to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.	Maintain R&D funding commitments and invest in places where the return on this investment is maximised and which are already acting as the engine room for levelling up.	HIGH
III By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.	Simpler, longer-term funding mechanisms to facilitate stable regional transport investment pipelines that support the priorities already set out in the strategies of the region's two Subnational Transport Bodies (STBs).	LOW
IV By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.	Ensure that the areas within the East of England with the poorest fixed and mobile connectivity are targeted first for intervention.	MEDIUM
V By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.	Particular attention should be given to the funding formula that applies to rural schools. In addition, greater funding than the announced £4.6bn is required to adequately support all children in education including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.	LOW

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
VI By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.	To meet the future needs of the region, there needs to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much greater in-work education provision and participation in further education and skills training for adults. • Improvements in the overall quality of training, access to training (linked to rurality and transport factors) and • A better alignment with employer needs. The Government should promote “skills devolution” to allow opportunities for greater local oversight of skills funding and coordination across local partnerships.	LOW
VII By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will have risen by five years.	Government funding policies should recognise the significant population growth in the East of England to ensure the region receives a fair share of funding overall for its demography, and that its most deprived areas are recognised within this. The delivery of inclusive economic recovery should ensure the gap in HLE is not widened further.	LOW
XIII By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.	To improve wellbeing in the region, the Government needs to work together with local authorities especially district and borough councils, business, charities and our communities to enable a more local, coordinated and preventative approach to tackling wellbeing inequality.	HIGH
IX By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.	The East of East must receive equitable funding through the Government’s levelling up policy to mitigate risks to sustainable growth. This is an even more pressing priority given the pressure on local government’s budgets overall, and the region’s recent population increases. The ability of councils to invest in our places and the public realm will be significantly curtailed by shrinking budgets.	MEDIUM

LEVELLING UP MISSION	KEY RECOMMENDATION	CONFIDENCE LEVEL
X By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.	The Government should institute a range of support for First Time Buyers, for example more support for Shared Ownership and a renewal of Help to Buy 2. Urgent Government investment is required to develop more social housing.	LOW
XI By 2030, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst affected areas.	Funding should be provided to police forces and partner agencies to support evidence based, public-health oriented, local initiatives to tackle complex crime issues with more research being conducted to understand the drivers of serious violence.	MEDIUM
XII By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.	Given the specific challenges on skills and transport (amongst others) in the East of England, the Government should, at pace, offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers of these – and other issues - to ensure devolution delivers benefits for all areas including more rural and coastal areas in the region.	MEDIUM
XIII By 2030, the levelling up agenda will not only be viewed by partners nationally, regionally and locally as inextricably linked to the agenda of delivering sustainable growth (including net zero targets and ensuring water security) but also progress on delivering joined up policies and interventions will have been achieved at every level of Government and in every region.	Sustainability, (including net zero and water security) should be integral to all further national, and local policy development and implementation approaches for Levelling Up.	MEDIUM

I PAY, EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

The East of England is a UK economic success story. Its economy is growing with an above average percentage of people in work and the number of jobs available outstripping those looking for work. It is one of only three regions which are net contributors to the Exchequer.

Its economy will continue to grow because it has such strengths in the economy of the future – life sciences, agri-tech, higher education, tourism and ICT. Meanwhile the city of Cambridge is undisputedly a globally competitive city.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will pay, employment and productivity rise in the East of England?	Growth should return to the economy and with it pay, employment and productivity should rise. But the pace of recovery nationally given the current period of recession is likely to be slower than anticipated at the time of the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper, and for the East of England there are specific barriers still to address.	MEDIUM
Does the East of England contain a globally competitive city?	Undisputedly yes, Cambridge.	HIGH
Will the gap between the top performing and other areas close by 2030?	Probably not without significant further Government intervention. The specific reasons for this from the perspective of the East of England are outlined in the chapters of this report.	LOW

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

It is recommended that the Government and industry must do the following to ensure that this mission is achieved by 2030:

1. Recognise the unique challenges to improve pay, employment and productivity in rural and coastal areas and publish a rural levelling up strategy to address these challenges. Any rural strategy must be embraced and integrated into all Local Authorities plans to level up and address regional economic inequalities.
2. Commit sufficient investment to enhance rail and other key infrastructure priorities in the region, particularly focusing on capacity, reliability, efficiency and sustainability.
3. For all stakeholders in education, industry and politics to cooperate on regional skills strategies, address specific shortages and understand the important role green skills will play in the East's future.



II RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

The White Paper quite rightly recognises the role which the UK's world-class universities play in supporting high performing "economic clusters" around the country. The East of England has pioneered the relationship between research and commerce, which has leveraged one of the world's leading innovation ecosystems.

The region therefore applauds the Government's aspiration to increase domestic R&D, to create a science superpower and to deliver innovation everywhere. However, these goals must not undermine the excellence that is already established and needs to be sustained, including in the East of England.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will domestic public investment in R&D in the Greater South East increase (even if not as greatly as elsewhere)?	We welcome the Government's commitment to increasing public R&D spending to £20bn by 2024/25 and encourage them to retain the ambition to increase public R&D spending to £22bn by 2027. This will harness additional private investment and is vital to driving economic growth through innovation and making the UK a leading location for the industries of the future.	HIGH
Will any additional spending leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth?	This is certainly the case in the East of England which has a track record of innovation, co-production and commercialisation.	HIGH

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. Maintain R&D funding commitments and invest in places where the return on this investment is maximised and which can act as engines for levelling up.

We welcome the Government's commitment to increasing public R&D spending to £20bn by 2024/25 and encourage them to retain the ambition to increase public R&D spending to £22bn by 2027. This will harness additional private investment and is vital to driving economic growth through innovation and making the UK a leading location for the industries of the future.

2. Invest in the infrastructure to sustain R&D-led levelling up. This includes critical research and innovation infrastructure which the businesses of tomorrow are finding it increasingly difficult to access.

Across the Oxford-Cambridge region there is over 2.8 million sq ft of demand and virtually no lab space available. Government should also embrace opportunities for enhanced connectivity through key strategic transport links, notably East West Rail. This will ensure that the benefits of growth can be spread out across the Oxford to Cambridge corridor and beyond to some of the East of England's more deprived areas in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. There is £8bn+ of RD&I investment currently being sought across the Arc but this global capital and these innovation businesses will go elsewhere internationally and be lost to the UK if the Oxford-Cambridge Arc opportunity is not grasped.

3. Expand the University Enterprise Zones (UEZ) programme to other Universities in the East and across England. A 2020 evaluation of UEZs found that for every £1 of UEZ funding provided by government, UEZs generated £4.50 of additional public and private funding. UEZs are providing space for start-ups, supporting collaborative research projects, boosting university partnerships with employers, creating jobs, helping to meet skills needs and providing opportunities for apprentices.

III TRANSPORT

The East of England's £153 billion economy relies on the web of transport connections between its major towns, cities, and ports, and its rural and coastal communities.

The region's 17 ports and airports attract ongoing international investment, move essential goods entering our region, across our region and into the rest of the UK. However safer, more reliable and more sustainable journeys across our road, rail and local networks are required.

Poor access and lack of connections hinder not just economic growth, but also broader determinants of health and wellbeing, life chances in terms of access to education and skills training opportunities, access to housing, quality of life and public health – illustrating the importance of an integration approach to sustainable growth and Levelling Up.

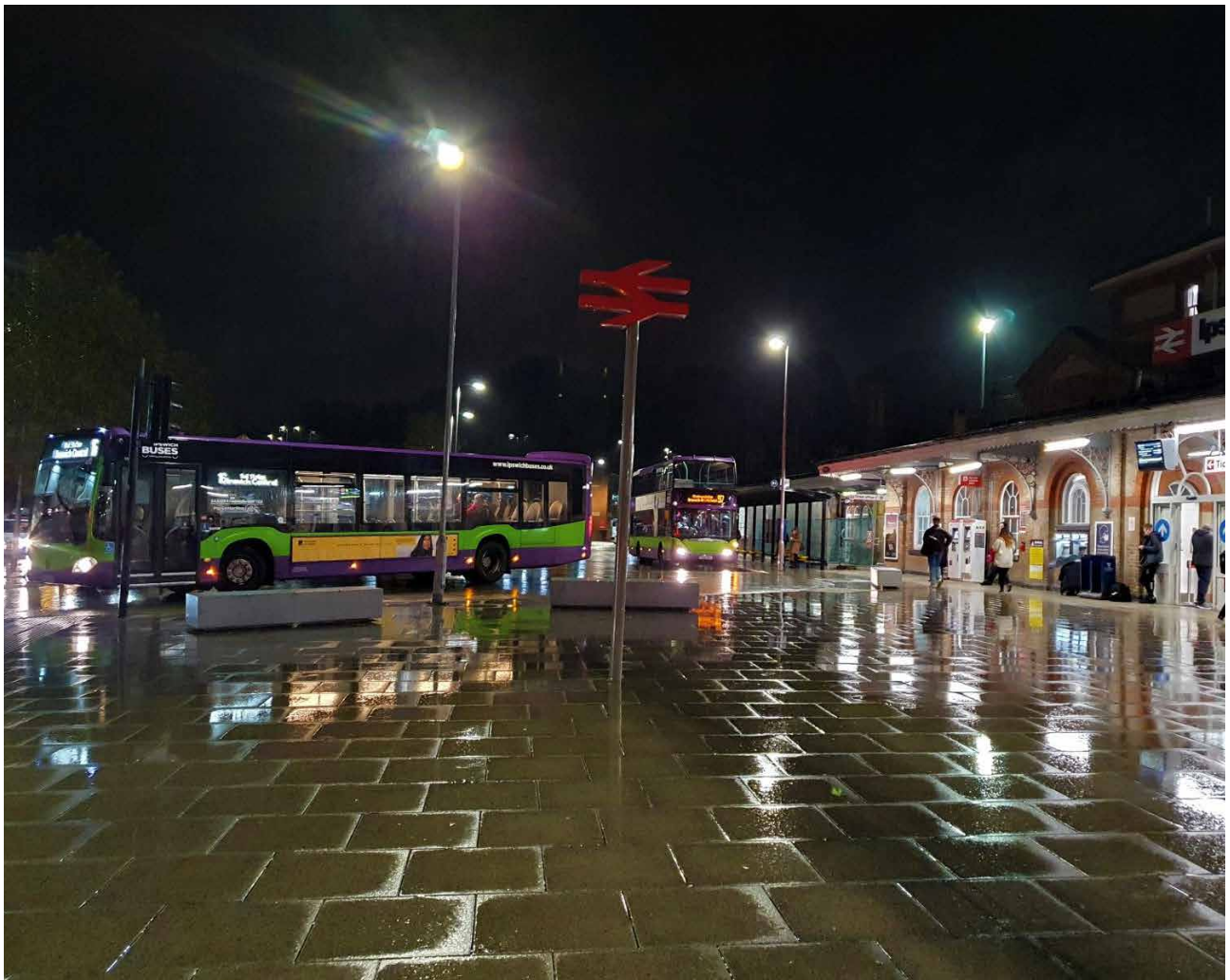
When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will local public transport connectivity across the country be significantly closer to the standards of London?	This seems highly unlikely unless projects in the Rail Network Enhancement Programme including Ely and Haughley Junctions are supported by the Government and funding is allocated to support buses in those authorities which did not receive a Bus Service Improvement Plan funding.	LOW
Will there be improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing?	Again, this seems unlikely without further Government support and funding despite the best efforts of local Enhanced Bus Partnerships and the region's two sub-national transport bodies, Transport East and EEH.	LOW



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. Increased and stable funding for bus services and network maintenance across all Local Transport Authorities as well as commitment to major rail schemes identified in the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline and East-West Rail central section.
2. Simpler, longer-term funding mechanisms to facilitate stable regional transport investment pipelines that support the priorities already set out in the strategies of the region's two Subnational Transport Bodies (STBs).
3. Scheme appraisals focused on delivering outcomes most relevant to specific places, including economic growth, other levelling up metrics and decarbonisation.

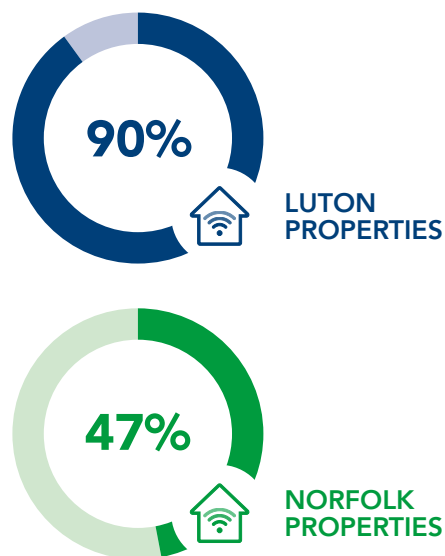


IV DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Due to the rurality of the East of England, vast disparities exist in the quality and reliability of digital connectivity across the region. Some of our more urban areas experience relatively high internet speeds.

For example, more than 90% of properties in Luton have access to gigabit capable broadband. However, other areas are being significantly left behind, with only 47% of properties in Norfolk having access to gigabit capable broadband.

Some of the biggest issues we face in the East of England are with mobile connectivity. The Government and the provider-led Shared Rural Network programme will not achieve its desired aims if it does not account for areas outside of the original scope and which have now been identified by local authorities as in need of intervention.



When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will the East of England have full gigabit-capable broadband?	Yes probably. However, we would like to see a more ambitious delivery target from government.	MEDIUM
By 2030, will the East of England have full 4G coverage and 5G coverage for the majority of the population?	It will be very hard for government to achieve full 4G coverage if the issues around the shortfalls in the Shared Rural Network programme are not addressed.	LOW

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. Ensure that the procurement exercises and resulting delivery plans for Norfolk, Suffolk and Thurrock, the three areas with the highest percentage of properties with the slowest internet speeds, prioritise those areas with the biggest issues and do not just focus on the 'easy wins'. Also ensure the procurement exercise to secure improvements in Essex is not delayed unnecessarily.
2. Revisit the intervention areas for the Shared Rural Network programme to ensure this reflects the true picture of coverage issues across our region. Also, share information about current and planned improvements with local authority officers and provide an up to date roadmap for the Shared Rural Network for the East of England.
3. At the earliest opportunity, publish delivery plans to achieve improvements in 'very hard to reach areas' following the 'call for evidence' that was completed in June 2021.
4. Ensure that nationally-led, major transport infrastructure schemes also include fibre ducting improvements to maximise on these projects.



V EDUCATION

Improved educational achievement benefits not only the individuals themselves – improving for example their life chances and sense of wellbeing - but also improves economic growth.

In a region where there is great demand for an educated workforce, the aspiration to 90% achievement at Key Stage Two (KS2) is strongly supported by all sectors and all parties across the East of England.

However currently just 64% of primary school children in the East of England achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. This is below the England average of 65%. In two areas of the region attainment was less than 60% (Fenland at 52% and Peterborough at 56%).

Three areas (Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Norwich and Ipswich) have been identified by the Government as Priority Areas within the seven Education Improvement Areas in the region.



When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

<p>By 2030, will the number of primary school children in the East of England achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths have increased to 90%?</p>	<p>The local government sectors welcomed the additional £4.6 billion in school funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 announced in the Autumn Statement, which will help at a time when schools are struggling with rising energy and food bills, alongside the need to fund agreed pay rises, including for teachers.</p> <p>However, the Institute for Government (IfG) have said it would be “virtually impossible” to deliver the 90% primary education goal in “only eight years, without any known approaches that have been effective in producing the scale of improvement needed.”</p>	<p>LOW</p>
<p>By 2030, will the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas have increased by over a third?</p>	<p>Given the cost of living pressure and the likely increase in child poverty, the inequality gap is more likely to widen than narrow in the short term, and significant pressures remain on delivering a 10% increase in SEND packages.</p> <p>In the current circumstances, maintaining the current position would be considered a success. In the longer term, if stable and sufficient funding can be provided, in addition to ongoing concerted effort in the Education Investment Areas (EIAs) and Priority Areas, then some progress will hopefully be achieved towards this ambition.</p>	<p>LOW</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

In order to be on track:

1. A significant part of increased school funding of £4.6bn over the next two years should be allocated to councils to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Particular attention should be given to the funding formula that applies to rural schools.
2. In addition to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) programme of activity in the longer term it will be necessary to improve and extend early years support and education as well special educational needs so that children have the best start in life and educational opportunities are levelled up for all children.
3. The better alignment of education with wider Government policies all related to levelling up such as health, the economy and income (benefits). A greater awareness of the particular problems that rural schools face – for example difficulties in recruitment – would also assist many schools in the East of England.



VI SKILLS

The East of England is one the country's most economically successful regions, home to many of the growing industries of the future.

However, key barriers include overall skills shortages, mismatches between skills programmes and with local employer needs, low participation rates in high-quality skills training and low uptake of in-work training, which combined are already presenting significant challenges for the region.

Skills participation and achievements have been declining significantly over the past 10 years, across all regions in England. In the East of England, in 2021/22 the indicative participation rate per 100,000 population was 3,658 (approximately 3.6% of adults), which was the lowest of all the regions in England. The region is also currently in 8th position out of 9 for number of apprenticeships.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030 will the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training in the East of England region have significantly increased (by 20,000 with 8,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas)?

There seems little evidence that the region's very low participation rates will increase significantly without further substantial actions and interventions.

LOW



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. The Government should promote “skills devolution” to allow opportunities for greater local oversight of skills funding and coordination across local partnerships.
 - More than ever we need to work collaboratively to address the skills and labour market challenges faced by our region and to respond to the proposals set out within the Government’s White Paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth. The local Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) which bring together employers, skills providers, local authorities and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level will be at the centre of this.
2. Continued Government investment in skills and a commitment to put employers at the heart of skills provision.
 - Participation in further education and skills training in the region is at the lowest level in England so targeted Government investment is needed if the mission is to be achieved by 2030. There also needs to be greater alignment between further education and skills training and the requirement of our employers to ensure skills levels meet the region’s key growth sectors. Targeted investment is needed to enable employers to improve skills provision and participation and address skills shortages through work-based learning programmes. DfE piloted new employer-led Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) in 2021-22 and supported providers with Strategic Development Funding (SDF) to help shape technical skills provision to better meet local labour market needs. The East of England was awarded £10,181,954 in funding from the SDF for 2022/23 to support the development of the region’s teaching and training provision and update facilities in preparation for the Government roll-out of LSIPs across England. Continued targeted investment of this kind is needed to ensure the region has the right skills for the future.
3. Improved messaging from local and national Government around post-19 skills training.
 - Some core barriers to skills training uptake are people not feeling training is worth the time or money and a lack of awareness of the options available. Strong communications and consistent messaging are needed, both from local and national Government and the private sector, to emphasise the importance of skills training and to highlight the options available for continued learning.

VII HEALTH

Although overall, healthy life expectancy in the East of England is better than the national average, within the region there are inequalities both for men and for women.

There are also a significant number of challenges to achieving the levelling up mission in relation to healthy life expectancy by 2030, including the impact of current and any future pandemic events including the impact of long Covid; the number of children living in poverty; the impact of long term debt, homelessness/evictions/rent and mortgage arrears due to rising cost of living and the recession we have just entered, coupled with a lack of affordable housing and the need to mitigate the impact of climate change, especially in coastal regions.

The existing care sector workforce crisis also means more older people, those with disabilities, or others in need of support for more independent living, are likely to be adversely affected by the current workforce conditions.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will have risen by five years.

It is currently not possible to make an accurate assessment of the likelihood of delivery by 2030, especially as the impact of the most recent factors affecting this ambition are yet to be evidenced in terms of their medium-term effects. However, there is currently low confidence that this ambition can be met within the target timescale.

LOW



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. Government funding policies should recognise the significant population growth in the East of England to ensure the region receives a fair share of funding overall for its demography, and that its most deprived areas are recognised within this. The delivery of inclusive recovery and inclusive growth will ensure the gap in HLE is not widened further.
2. Sustainable solutions to the planning and delivery of integrated workforce for health and social care are critical to ensure quality and safety of care, reduce vacancies, prevent avoidable cost pressures and mitigate against further deterioration in HLE.
3. We would also recommend to the six Integrated Care Systems in the East of England that:
 - To improve HLE in all parts of the East of England, it is crucial that all agencies work together on a collaborative, evidence-driven approach towards early intervention and prevention service design and delivery.
 - Interventions to address inequalities in HLE need to be planned and targeted based on clear understanding of root causes and what will work in different settings and for particular groups of the population.
 - The new Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) should prioritise investment in targeted and impactful prevention and early intervention programmes.
 - The lessons learned from the multiagency responses during Covid should be built on. These could provide models for designing and delivering more impactful multiagency interventions in the medium term.
 - The East of England region has a very vibrant and vital resource in terms of academic knowledge which could further support this levelling up mission.

VIII WELLBEING

Wellbeing captures the extent to which people lead happy and fulfilling lives, which is the overarching objective for levelling up.

When measured by the life satisfaction rating (a key measure of wellbeing) the East of England sits just above the average in the UK as a whole, however during 2020-21 there was a marked downward trend in life satisfaction in our region, as elsewhere, reflecting the impact of the first year of Covid-19.

The picture at a local level is more complex. Of those areas in the Government's Priority 1 areas for Levelling Up funding, King's Lynn and West Norfolk has the highest satisfaction and Peterborough the lowest. This reflects that there are complex and often hyper-local factors affecting wellbeing.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will wellbeing will have improved in the East of England, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing?

Our assessment is that over time wellbeing will improve and the gap may narrow in our region.

HIGH

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

1. To improve wellbeing in the region, Government needs to work together with local authorities especially district and borough councils, business, charities and our communities to enable a more local, coordinated and preventative approach to tackling wellbeing inequality.
 - Multiple agencies take a role in leading aspects of wellbeing, but better coordination of effort and investment is needed. Government needs to work together with local authorities, business, charities and our communities to enable a more coordinated approach to wellbeing, prevention, social determinants and early intervention programmes. Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) in the East of England should play a bigger role in shaping the future of their local services through a more strategic and integrated approach and need to make better use of squeezed budgets to achieve better outcomes for individuals in the region.

2. Investment in public services and a preventative approach to tackle wellbeing inequalities.

- Public services such as transport, healthcare, public safety, availability of quality jobs and affordable housing are important generators of quality of life and of fairer life chances. A focus of Government and local authorities should be to shift the balance of investment towards a preventative approach to wellbeing with targeted investment in public services. Focusing resources at prevention can be a challenge for government and local authorities even when evidence about return on investment is strong. Resource needs to be proportionate to the degree of need in the region and should not be narrowly targeted towards one disadvantaged group or one geographical area.

3. Government to undertake further work to supplement existing data on well-being at a subnational level.

- The reliable measurement of wellbeing is an essential prerequisite to understanding the variation in different communities and the impact of policies and programmes. If the maximisation of wellbeing is the ultimate goal of the levelling up policy, wellbeing measurement must be better embedded within the public sector. The Government will need to undertake further work to supplement existing data on wellbeing at a subnational level, as well as to understand the drivers of wellbeing and identify the most impactful levers available to policymakers in order to better understand the complex and often hyper-local factors underpinning wellbeing.



IX PRIDE IN PLACE

The East of England is a diverse region with huge cultural, economic, and environmental differences.

However, we are united in respecting the importance of place in our areas, and we have strong foundations of working with our local communities to promote pride in place, having some of the best towns and cities in the country in our area along with beautiful countryside and coastline.

The Government has yet to finalise how this mission will be measured but, clearly metrics will need to include the ability to assess pride of place in non-urban areas and these could be linked to the development of the rural and coastal strategy for levelling up mentioned in I above.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, have risen in every area of the East of England, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing?

Measuring pride of place quantifiably can be difficult, but businesses, local authorities, universities and other large or anchor institutions can all play their part by working together to develop the local places they are grounded in.

MEDIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REGION AND/OR THE GOVERNMENT TO BE ON TRACK TO DELIVER THE MISSION BY 2030

The East of England has a lot to be proud of on a regional and local level, from its strong foundations of collaboration, its academia and research credentials, its agriculture, its tourism, and green energy sectors. The region should continue to develop its identity as an agricultural heartland, but also push further towards becoming a modern and green region.

The region and central government should also embrace partnership working between big employers in the East to create a better sense of place and create further sustainable growth opportunities. Businesses have a lot to offer in terms of supporting and enhancing local communities and should be part of the solution.

In addition, the East of England needs to achieve the level of government funding that other areas are receiving. The East of England received the second lowest amount of funding from the Levelling Up fund per capita, with only London receiving less. This is funding that could have been used to promote further return on investment within our region and enhance pride in our places.

To be serious about levelling up nationally means to be serious about this in the East of England to make sure that our entire region can prosper.

Some organisations, such as the London School of Economics and the Bennett Institute, are calling for the Community Ownership Fund to be increased in size from £150m to £1bn, to better resource community groups, build capacity within civil society, which could alleviate some of the pressure on local authorities.

The pursuit of pride in place must be integrated with a consistent and effective programme of devolution, so local people can decide the priorities of their local places.

The Levelling Up paper has started by outlining a devolution framework, and we look forward to seeing this unfold in practice. We encourage the government to be ambitious, and to trust local areas to act in the best interests of their citizens.

Finally, it's important that the UK Government works with statistical bodies, thinktanks and local communities to establish how best to measure pride in place. As the exact method of measurement is likely to impact on the outputs produced, serious thought must be put into this along with the resources needed to measure this effectively both within the framework of local government data and from other data and intelligence sources.

Specific Recommendations:

1. The East of East must receive equitable funding through the Government's levelling up policy to mitigate risks to sustainable growth. This is an even more pressing priority given the pressure on local government's budgets overall, and the region's recent population increases. The ability of councils to invest in our places and the public realm will be significantly curtailed by shrinking budgets.
2. There is a need to promote more effective methods and research into measuring pride of place, including the most effective and efficient methods of community engagement in the digital era.

X HOUSING

Home ownership in the East of England is the highest of any English region, standing at 67.4% in 2021. However, homes to buy are less affordable in the East of England than in the rest of the UK. In 42 out of the 45 housing areas average home prices are more than 8 times the median wage.

Unfortunately Government statistics are not available to show the specific numbers of First Time Buyers in the East of England, so ascertaining whether the trend is positive or negative has been impossible.

The East of England has an above average number of non-decent homes in the private rented sector, almost 1 in 4. Making homes decent, including more insulated, is a priority at a time of steeply rising energy bills but progress on reducing the number of non-decent homes is subject to national funding for local authorities.

There is also significant shortage in the availability of social and affordable homes to rent. Urgent government investment is required to reduce this shortfall.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will renters have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas?	The prospects for first time buyers look bleak at least in the short term in our region, with numbers expected to decrease over the next couple of years. The achievement of this mission will depend on macro-economic factors including whether the Government provides funding for a new round of market interventions.	LOW
By 2030 will the number of non-decent rented homes have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas?	Without earmarked Government funding for councils, the 50% reduction over the last ten years is highly unlikely to be matched by a further 50% reduction by 2030.	LOW

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government should institute a range of support for First Time Buyers including more support for Shared Ownership and a renewal of Help to Buy 2. The Government may also need to look at mortgage rescue schemes rather than mortgage guarantee schemes.
2. The East of England has a huge non-decent homes challenge especially in the private rented sector where one in four is non-decent. Central government funding to councils is required in order to continue to reduce the number of non-decent homes.
3. The Government should increase investment in much needed genuinely affordable homes, with some funding targeted at social rented properties for low or no income households.



XI CRIME

Trends in homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime and in the East of England follow a similar pattern to the national picture:



The homicide rate in the East of England has remained relatively stable since 2015-16. In 2021-22, the homicide rate was just above the England average at 11.7 homicides per 1 million population.

(if Essex's high homicide rate is excluded, it is well below average).



Neighbourhood crime has fallen in the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As the pandemic has eased it will be important to monitor if these crimes continue to trend down or rise to previous levels.



Serious violence in the East of England (measured by hospital admissions for assault by a sharp object for those under the age of 25) has fallen between 2017-18 to 2020-21.

Serious violence is an issue of concern across the East of England. The complexity of addressing serious violence means however that approaches need to be localised, evidence-based and public-health oriented. Local areas in the East of England are likely to face specific challenges in dealing with these crimes in the coming years to due limited resources and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime have fallen in the East of England, including in the worst affected areas?

Current long-term trends suggest this mission will be met although there are concerns that in the short term a combination of constrained funding for police forces and cost of living pressures on communities, will make progress more difficult.

MEDIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the region and/or the Government in order to be on track to deliver the mission by 2030, we propose the following recommendations:

1. Funding is provided across the region to police forces and partner agencies to tackle complex crime issues such as serious violence and further research is undertaken to understand the drivers of serious violence.
2. Police forces to continue to implement local evidence-based crime prevention initiatives taking a community-oriented, public-health approach to reducing serious violence.
3. Police forces to continue to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and address local issues.



XII DEVOLUTION

Unlike some other regions in England, the East of England has not experienced widespread devolution of funding and powers from central government to local areas and positive outcomes for its residents and businesses are being held back because of this.

The region has experienced devolution in some localities, covering some aspects of policy, including the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

In addition, Norfolk and Suffolk entered into county deal negotiations with central government during 2022, with Suffolk's deal confirmed in the 2022 Autumn Statement, along with an announcement that Norfolk's deal would follow shortly thereafter. Proposed Devolution Deals for Norfolk and Suffolk were subsequently signed on December 8, 2022. However, this programme needs to go much further.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will every part of the East of England that wants a devolution deal have one?	Possibly, but this will require Government to work at a much faster pace and develop deals that reflect regional characteristics and wants i.e. not one size fits all.	MEDIUM
Will these deals give powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement?	They could, but for policy areas like transport, there needs to be Government recognition that delivery is very different in rural and coastal areas compared to metropolitan areas.	MEDIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers to ensure the model works for more rural areas in the East of England. In particular, given the specific challenges on skills and transport (amongst others) in the East of England, the Government should offer flexibility of approach in devolved funding and powers of these – and other issues - to ensure devolution delivers benefits for all areas including more rural and coastal areas in the region.
2. Ensure that devolution negotiations and deals are completed at a pace which achieves better outcomes for people and communities as quickly as possible: specifically guard against current economic pressures hindering progress towards devolution deals.
3. Areas of the region that were not announced in the first wave of county deals should work together at the earliest possible opportunity and engage with the residents and businesses they serve.



XIII SUSTAINABILITY

The East of England is now at the sharp end of climate change with distinct and immediate climate threats including drought and associated fire risks, flooding, biodiversity and water security, and the rate of coastal erosion.

Given the national legally binding and high-profile commitments the government has made regarding climate change, East of England partners believe that any national level strategy which distributes investment and informs planning via local authorities should consider sustainability, including impact on the environment, climate change mitigations and water security.

The region also has a major contribution to make to decarbonisation, with more than 50% of all renewable energy generated here. There is however much more to do, for example rolling out the infrastructure for electric vehicles at the pace needed to meet EV national targets; fundamentally changing how homes and businesses are heated and cooled; increasing our overall grid capacity; and the generation and distribution of more renewable energy.

When it comes to the **key components of this Levelling Up mission**, the questions - and our answers - are:

By 2030, will the levelling up agenda be inextricably linked to the agenda of delivering sustainable growth (e.g. including net zero targets and ensuring water security) and will there have been progress on delivering joined up policies and interventions at every level?

The East of England has confidence that partners in the East of England along with central Government can move forward positively on this agenda. However

- The respective roles, levers and funding arrangements between national government, local government, the private sector and the public need to be articulated in a clearer roadmap.
- The critical role of local authorities in the planning and delivery of sustainability and resilience in local places needs to be properly funded in the medium term.

MEDIUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

Without considering carbon emissions in the delivery of levelling up, the Government is ignoring its own commitments to preventing the climate crisis and seriously risking climate stability for future generations. Meanwhile organisations in the East of England are working hard to improve climate resilience and help grow the economy through green jobs.

The Government should support this by:

- Sustainability, (including net zero and water security) should be integral to all further national, and local policy development and implementation approaches for Levelling Up.
- Acknowledging the East of England is at the sharp end of climate change in the UK and supporting the region's efforts to adapt to changing weather through innovation, technology, and infrastructure.
- Committing to working in partnership with local councils to facilitate an acceleration in the roll out of the infrastructure needed for Electric Vehicles.



Levelling up the East of England: 2023-2030

The East of England's progress towards achieving the Government's twelve levelling up missions.

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Please note the report reflects the views of the APPG and EELGA Chairs only and not those who have provided very welcome advice, information and examples.

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